



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

**INSIDE:** GAMES, JOKES,  
AND MORE!

# KIDS

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8

INCREDIBLE

## Elephant Stories

NEW  
movie



MONSTERS  
VS. ALIENS

PAMPER  
YOUR  
PET



KAYAKING  
OTTER



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GEOGRAPHIC

MARCH 2009

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## Just for KIDS online!

Go online for some fun with dogs! Learn about the *Iditarod* dogsled race, see pictures of dogs with jobs, and watch animal videos. [kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)



## On the Cover

The bond between an elephant mom and baby is strong.

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BY MARILYN TERRELL

# Check out these 9 outrageous facts.



**SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER**  
IS MORE POPULAR ON THE  
EAST COAST OF THE  
UNITED STATES;

**CHUNKY**  
RULES ON THE WEST COAST.

THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE TREE HOUSE,  
LOCATED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM,

**COST \$7 MILLION.**

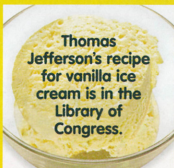


THERE  
CAN BE ABOUT A  
**BILLION**  
**BACTERIA**  
IN YOUR MOUTH  
RIGHT NOW.

**CROCODILES**  
HAVE BEEN  
AROUND FOR  
ABOUT 200  
MILLION  
YEARS.



Thomas  
Jefferson's recipe  
for vanilla ice  
cream is in the  
Library of  
Congress.



SCIENTISTS  
BELIEVE  
THAT  
SATURN'S  
RINGS  
WILL EVENTUALLY  
DISAPPEAR.



**SOME FISH CAN**  
**CHANGE FROM**  
**FEMALE TO**  
**MALE.**



BETWEEN

**1912**  
AND  
**1918,**



YOU COULD  
TAKE YOUR  
MONEY TO

WASHINGTON

TO BE  
**WASHED**  
AND  
**IRONED.**

# Guinness World Records

## TINY HAMSTER



Roborovski desert hamsters are so small that an adult is about the size of a man's thumb, making it the smallest species of domestic hamster. The critter may be little, but it's also fast and strong. In their wild home in Mongolia and China, hamsters have been known to dig tunnels up to 6½ feet deep; in human homes, they've been clocked on their exercise wheels running 20 miles in 8½ hours.

## WOMAN GROWS BEARD



Yes, Vivian Wheeler has a beard. The woman who holds the record for the longest beard on a woman is proud of what makes her different. Wheeler started shaving her face when she was 7 years old but decided more than 15 years ago to just let her beard grow. When last measured, the longest strand was 11 inches long. Wow!

## CRAZY RACE

You've probably competed in a 3-legged race. But have you tried a 31-legged race? That's what Japanese sixth graders did, and one group finished so fast—164 feet in 8.8 seconds—that they earned a record for the fastest 31-legged race. The event was organized to teach the kids to work together. The winning group learned that setting a record is pretty cool, too.



# COOL inventions

BY DOUGLAS E. RICHARDS

## ULTRA-COMPACT VEHICLE

Thrilled with the ride, you zip along on the smallest, coolest looking vehicle ever. Instead of front and back wheels, its two wheels are side by side—and just inches apart. From the side it looks like a unicycle from the future. It's the Uno, a vehicle much smaller and more maneuverable than even a motorcycle. It's electric, so it doesn't pollute, and its top speed is about 15 miles an hour. An internal, high-tech gyroscope, controlled by body movements, keeps you balanced. Lean forward to accelerate, to the side to turn, and backward to stop. The Uno's inventor? An 18-year-old inspired to build a nonpolluting way to get around.



## SUPERHUMAN VISION

Ever wish you had eyes that could zoom in on objects far off in the distance? Or watch television, surf the Web, or play a video game on a display that hovers in front of you wherever you go? The ability to do all of this and more may be in your future. Scientists have created a bionic contact lens containing electronic circuits one-thousandth the width of a human hair. In future versions a miniature display could be added to the lens to project images that only you can see. The bionic lens won't block your vision or bother your eyes. These contacts might even make Superman jealous. While his eyes can see through walls, only yours will be able to surf the Web!



## FLEXIBLE LIGHT-UP KEYBOARD

As you head over to a friend's house for a sleepover, you know you'll want to play computer games even after "lights out." So you grab your Bendi Board keyboard, roll it up, and stuff it into your backpack. Lightweight and flexible, these keyboards are easily portable. And typing in the dark is no problem. Just flip a switch and the Bendi Board glows with its own light. It's quiet, too, so no one will hear you clicking as you conquer new levels. Even spilling your midnight snack on it is no big deal. The Bendi Board is waterproof, so cleanups are easy.





# video game CENTRAL

BY MARK MACDONALD

## VIRTUAL VACATION

It's spring break! Even if your family isn't taking a dream vacation to some awesome place while you're out of school, you can "travel" to a fun destination on your own. Try any of these three games to take a virtual trip—without leaving the comfort of your own home.



### ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK

Wii

Think of this game as a way for all your friends who live far away to travel to see you. In *Animal Crossing*, players get to create their own virtual home that friends can visit online. Furnish yours with items from the Gracie Grace fashion boutique, or design your own paintings and carpets to impress your visitors. Once you've given your friends the grand tour, you can head out together to go digging for treasure, build a snowman, or maybe try some fishing.

**>> TIP #1** Don't like the look of your character? Head over to Harriet's Beauty Salon and you can do more than just change your hairstyle—you can find a mask that looks just like any of your Mii people.

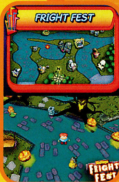
**>> TIP #2** Try playing the game during holidays in the real world to watch the virtual characters in your town celebrate. You can dig for eggs on Easter, wear a costume on Halloween, or celebrate New Year's Eve.



## SIX FLAGS FUN PARK

Nintendo DS

Is your idea of a vacation a trip to an amusement park? This video game version of a Six Flags theme park is always open, and you don't have to convince your parents to take you anywhere! Choose from 32 mini-games to play either alone or with friends. It has all the standard games you might expect, such as batting cages and boat racing, plus stuff you could never do in real life, such as help Joe Space Hero save the universe. You can also play crazy versions of Skee-Ball (roll cannonballs at the pirates) and Whac-A-Mole (keep those scary ghoules in the ground).



**>> TIP #1** Check every tree and trash can. Some of them hold hidden items you can find.  
**>> TIP #2** Try talking to kids wearing different costumes to find a few special messages.

## Wii SPORTS RESORT

Wii

Prefer somewhere tropical for your virtual vacation? It's always sunny on the beautiful island of *Wii Sports Resort*. Since all of its ten mini-games use the Wii's motion-sensing abilities, it even feels like you're out on the beach having fun! Hop on a Jet Ski and cruise across the ocean. (Steer by holding the Wii remote and Nunchuk attachment out in front of you and moving them like real handlebars.) Or you can teach your dog to catch a Frisbee. (Guide the angle and how far the disk goes by how you wave the Wii remote in the air.)

**>> TIP #1** The Wii MotionPlus attachment is what makes the controls in *Resort* even better than the last *Wii Sports*. If you want to try any of the two-player games, make sure you have an extra MotionPlus attachment for the other Wii remote.  
**>> TIP #2** In *Sword Play*, use the B button to block your opponent's moves, and then immediately follow up with some swipes of your own to win.



# green scene

BY JILL YAWORSKI

## CREATE A HUMMINGBIRD GARDEN!

**S**eventeen different species of colorful hummingbirds live throughout the United States—probably near you. These tiny birds, with their sparkling iridescent feathers, are fun to watch as they dart from flower to flower. Use plants native to your area to create a garden that will attract hummingbirds to your yard. By growing native plants you'll have a garden that thrives naturally and is good for the environment. Here are some hummingbird favorites to plant in your garden.

A hummingbird's wings beat 40 to 80 times a second.

Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backward.

Hummingbirds can hover in midair.

For more about helping the Earth, go online.  
[preserveourplanet.com](http://preserveourplanet.com)

### TO ATTRACT HUMMINGBIRDS

Hovering all day can be exhausting, so hummingbirds need to refuel often. They feed on the flowers' nectar, which is rich in energy. A hummingbird can drink half its weight in just one day. Hummingbirds will feed from any nectar-producing flower, no matter what its shape or color. Attract your feathered friends by filling your garden with these "flight fuel" flowers.



BEE BALM



TEXAS  
SAGE



PENSTEMON



TRUMPET  
CREEPER



TRUMPET  
HONEYSUCKLE

# PET VET



## Ask Dr. Seymour Katz

Ever have questions about your pet? Ask Dr. Seymour Katz the Pet Vet. He answers questions about life from a pet's point of view.

### Q Why aren't DOGS AND CATS ALLERGIC to humans?

**A** Unlike Fido and Fluffy, humans don't have fur, which contains a lot of dandruff-like dander that can trigger allergies. But pets can have allergies. In rare cases, dust, pollen, fleas, or certain foods can cause excessive itching, ear infections, or digestive problems in cats and dogs. If your pet has any of these symptoms—which can occur for other reasons, too—visit a veterinarian soon.

—Jill Yaworski

### Most Popular Pet Names in the U.S.

#### Top Dog Names

1. Max
2. Bailey
3. Bella
4. Molly
5. Lucy
6. Buddy
7. Maggie
8. Daisy
9. Sophie
10. Chloe

#### Top Cat Names

1. Max
2. Tigger
3. Chloe
4. Tiger
5. Shadow
6. Lucy
7. Smokey
8. Oliver
9. Bella
10. Charlie

### Q Why do CATS' EYES seem to GLOW AT NIGHT?

**A** Nothing puts the twinkle in a cat's eye like hunting at night. The back of a feline's eye has a special mirror-like surface, called a tapetum. Light rays reflect off this surface, boosting the amount of light the eyes can use. So even in low light, cats can pounce "purr-fectly" on prey—or a squeaky toy.

—Sean Price



### Q Do FROGS REALLY EAT their OWN SKIN?

**A** Yes. In a process called molting, most frogs twist and wriggle out of their skin as often as once a month or more. By chowing down on the used skin, the frog takes in nutrients and water without having to hunt for food. A new skin has already formed underneath, so losing the skin is, well, no skin off the frog's back.

—Sean Price

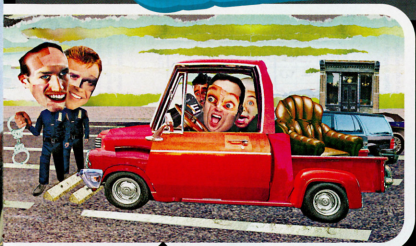




# Stupid Criminals

BY ELISABETH DEFFNER

**BUSTED!**



## Running on Empty

COOKEVILLE, TENNESSEE

A getaway car is no good if you can't get away. When officers responded to reports of a suspicious truck at a store, they found the vehicle in the parking lot with a stolen recliner in the back—and three suspects inside. Apparently the crooks hadn't noticed the truck was low on gas when they pulled into the parking lot. They ran out of gas when they tried to leave! The crooks were so shocked they just sat there. "These guys weren't great planners," Captain David Dukes says.

**LOL**

CATAWBA COUNTY,  
NORTH CAROLINA

This criminal sent the right text message—to the wrong person. Officers had arrested one suspect in a series of break-ins and took his cell phone as evidence. So when the nabbed burglar received a text message from his partner in crime, the officers read it. "R U cot yet?" the message read. "Not yet, can u come get me?" officers texted back. When the bad guy went to pick up his friend, police were waiting. "This was hilarious," Major Coy Reid says. "I still can't believe this guy texted us back."



## Snack Bandits

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Hansel and Gretel left a trail of bread crumbs to follow. These dumb crooks left a trail of cheese curls. Police investigating a shattered vending machine at a recreation center found the snacks missing, and a trail of orange cheese curls led them all the way to a nearby house. Officers found the stolen snacks in a closet and busted the crooks. These guys should have listened when their moms told them, "No snacking between meals."

Bet you  
**didn't  
know**

BY KIMBERLY FORKNER

# **7** earthshaking facts about **dinos**

**1** A *Tyrannosaurus rex* fossil was sold to a museum for more than **eight million** dollars.

**2** The **tallest** known dinosaur, *Sauroposeidon*, was taller than a five-story building.

**3** More dinosaurs have been found in **North America** than anywhere else.

**4** Dinosaur bones were mistaken for **dragon bones** when they were discovered in China more than **2,000 years ago**.

**5** The **biggest** known dinosaur **skull** is longer than a **racehorse's body**.

**6** No one knows what **color** dinosaurs were.

**7** The horned dinosaur *Dracorex hogwartsia* was named after Hogwarts, Harry Potter's school.



# Naughty PETS

CAUGHT  
ON CAMERA

WHERE'S  
MY ASSISTANT?  
I NEED MY  
SUNGLASSES.

GOOD THING  
I COATED THE  
SINK WITH  
TOOTHPASTE.



**NAME** Queso

**FAVORITE ACTIVITY**  
Turning on the faucet  
while the cat is  
sleeping in the sink

**FAVORITE TOY**  
Soap bubbles

**PET PEEVE**  
Cat beds



**NAME** Sabacca

**FAVORITE ACTIVITY**  
Watching humans  
perform tricks in  
the pool

**FAVORITE TOY**  
Pool raft

**PET PEEVE**  
Not being allowed to  
drink the pool water

YOU ARE  
THE WEIRDEST-  
LOOKING PUPPY  
I'VE EVER  
SEEN.

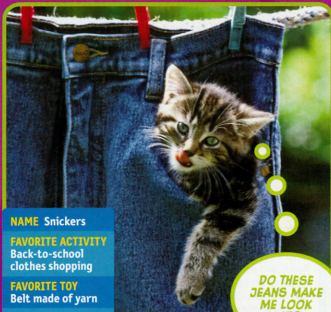


**NAME** Dr. X

**FAVORITE ACTIVITY**  
Creating evil puppy  
robots in his lab

**FAVORITE TOY**  
Remote controls

**PET PEEVE**  
Dead batteries



**NAME** Snickers

**FAVORITE ACTIVITY**  
Back-to-school  
clothes shopping

**FAVORITE TOY**  
Belt made of yarn

**PET PEEVE** School  
uniforms

DO THESE  
JEANS MAKE  
ME LOOK  
FAT?



# Wildlife WATCH

BY ROBIN TERRY

## High-Tech Cameras Reveal Blue Whale Secrets

A 100-ton blue whale breaks through the ocean's surface, its blowhole blasting water 20 feet into the air. Sitting in a tiny boat just ten feet away, research biologist John Calambokidis springs into action. He uses a pole to attach a high-tech video camera called a CRITTERCAM to the whale's back.

Created by National Geographic, CRITTERCAMs have been used on more than 50 species of land and marine animals. "The cameras allow us to look at the world from an animal's point of view," says CRITTERCAM inventor Greg Marshall. When the cameras fall off, they send out radio signals so the scientists can find them.

The technology is helping solve mysteries about endangered blue whales, the largest animals ever to have lived on Earth. "We can see what happens deep underwater," says Calambokidis, cofounder of Cascadia Research. Among other discoveries, the cameras have revealed that blue whales dive as deep as 1,000 feet and that their calls—one of the loudest sounds on Earth—are sometimes used to attract mates.

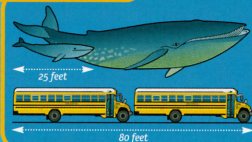
What's next for CRITTERCAM? Soon the cameras will be able to record whale calls and other sounds more clearly. Experts hope to find out if loud underwater noises, often created by ships, are dangerous to blue whales. Someday the knowledge gained from CRITTERCAMs could help scientists protect these giants of the sea.



A CRITTERCAM IS ATTACHED TO A BLUE WHALE WITH A GIANT SUCTION CUP.



AVERAGE LENGTHS OF ADULT AND BABY BLUE WHALES



### FIND OUT MORE

- TUNE IN TO "KINGDOM OF THE BLUE WHALE" ON THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL, SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2009, AT 8 P.M. ET/PT.
- READ THE MARCH ISSUE OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.
- GO ONLINE! [KIDS.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM](http://KIDS.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM)

# sports funnies

uh-oh!



Owen Hargreaves tries to field a soccer ball in a 2004 match in Germany.



The Netherlands' Mark Tuitert leads his team in a 2007 men's team pursuit speed skating race in Calgary, Alberta, in Canada.

from out of  
the mists  
of legend comes  
a new young  
warrior...

**Mouse:**  
Beware, or be  
caught in a  
deadly trap!



Who's your  
animal  
spirit?

Log on to [www.fiveancestors.com](http://www.fiveancestors.com)

**RAIMOND HOUSE**  
OUTRAGED & BORED

**YEARLING**

**LISTENING  
LIBRARY**

*Who's there?*  
**Alison.**  
*Alison who?*  
**Alison to you after  
you listen to me.**



Found on a veterinarian's office door:

# Back in 5 minutes.

# Sit! Stay!

**Q** Why did the chicken cross the road, roll in the dirt, then cross the road again?



**Q** What do you call a nervous zucchini?



**You've got to be joking...**

## Why did the

# lion

t out the  
clown?

Because he tasted funny.







# Amazing Animals

ARE WE THERE YET?



## OTTER RIDES KAYAK!



NEMO WAS BOTTLE-FED BY HUMANS AFTER HIS MOTHER REJECTED HIM.

An otter's nimble front paws can grab prey such as crawfish out from under rocks.

### Düsseldorf, Germany

It's easy finding Nemo the otter. Just look for the kayak. Wolfgang Gettmann adopted Nemo three years ago after the otter's mother rejected him. One day the curious otter spotted Gettmann's red kayak and hopped right on board. He now joins his new dad for kayak journeys along local rivers.

Otters usually spend most of their time in the water, so Nemo is completely at home both on the kayak and in the river. "He goes back and forth between the boat and the water," Gettmann says. "He catches fish and brings them up on the kayak to eat."

Gettmann is like an adoptive father to Nemo, and the otter seems to have adopted Gettmann's kayaking friends as his family, too. The otter frequently hops aboard familiar kayaks and playfully nips the paddlers' hands. It's his way of saying, "Hello"—or, perhaps, "Paddle faster!"

# PENGUIN BECOMES KNIGHT

Edinburgh, Scotland, in the United Kingdom

Sir Nils Olav is a king penguin, but he's not a real king. He is officially a knight, though. Since 1972 the Norwegian King's Guard—which protects Norway's royal family in times of crisis—has been “adopting”

king penguins as mascots. One reason is that the birds' black-and-white feathers resemble the soldiers' uniforms. Over the years, Nils has been promoted from member, to sergeant major, to colonel-in-chief, and now to knight. “Nils instantly recognizes the soldiers when they visit,” says penguin keeper Roslin Talbot. “He waddles over and squawks at them.” His knighthood ceremony was no different. Before receiving a sword tap on each shoulder (left), Nils walked past the line of soldiers at attention, occasionally stopping to inspect the troops. All the knighted penguin needs now is a suit of armor.

Centuries ago, knights worked for their king. Today knights are still appointed by the royal family, but the title is mostly symbolic and a reward for outstanding contributions to the country.



NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS VISIT SIR NILS EVERY FEW YEARS AT HIS ZOO HOME IN SCOTLAND.



NEXT  
TIME I WANT  
A VACATION  
I'LL GO ON  
A CRUISE.



Yosuke is pronounced YOH-soo-kay. His owner named him that because he wanted him to be a brilliant bird, and “yo” is Japanese for brilliant!

# LOST PARROT GIVES ADDRESS

Nagareyama, Japan

Yosuke the parrot is no birdbrain. He got lost once, and the African gray parrot was able to tell his rescuers his full name and exactly where he lived.

When Yosuke's owner took him outside for some fresh air, Yosuke flapped away. “We looked for Yosuke for three days, but we couldn't find him,” Yoshio Nakamura says. “We thought he wouldn't come back.”

What Nakamura didn't know was that police had found Yosuke and took him to a veterinarian. At first, Yosuke was shy. Then he started greeting people and singing. Suddenly, after about ten days, he squawked, “I'm Mr. Yosuke Nakamura,” and recited his address.

African grays are known for their intelligence and vocabulary. Yosuke knows about 50 phrases and took about a month to learn his address. Good thing he did—getting lost is strictly for the birds.



8

# INCREDIBLE ELEPHANT TALES

Family comes first for these  
smart and caring creatures.



BY SCOTT ELDER  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL NICHOLS, NG STOCK

**A**frican elephants are the biggest land animals on Earth. Standing as tall as 13 feet and sometimes weighing more than 6 tons, these jumbos aren't dumbos. Elephants have the largest brains of any land mammal, and that includes you! Of course, elephants aren't as smart as humans; our brains are bigger compared with the size of our bodies, and that relationship is one key to intelligence. Still, in the animal kingdom they're practically geniuses. Here's how elephants show their smarts in the wild.



1

## Elephants teach each other.

Not all of the humans that elephants encounter are friendly. The East African Maasai have a tradition of proving their bravery by spearing animals they consider dangerous, including elephants. Luckily, elephants can tell different human groups apart. In an experiment that proved this ability, elephants were presented with the clothing worn by two groups: the Maasai hunters and harmless local farmers. The elephants ran and hid when they saw or smelled the clothing worn by the Maasai, but reacted much more calmly to the farmers' clothes. Surprisingly, even elephants that had never been attacked responded in the same way. How did they know to run? "The elephants have learned over time and this kind of knowledge is passed down," says Joyce Poole, a biologist who studies elephants in Kenya with the organization Elephant Voices. "Just like humans: If your mother responds in a certain way, you learn from her by example."





## 2 Elephants listen to their elders.

Elephants rack up lots of birthdays. They live for about 60 years or more, which is one of the longest life spans among mammals. Elephants store all the knowledge they learn over the years in their big, powerful brains, and younger elephants trust the wisdom of their elders. Male elephants leave the family when they grow up, and the oldest female, called a matriarch, leads the group. All the adult females in the group help make decisions during calm times. "But if elephants are under threat, then everyone in the family looks to the matriarch for her strong and wise leadership," says Poole. "Families led by the oldest matriarchs tend to be dominant, survive droughts best, and have the most babies."

## 3 Elephants really never forget.

At one point, Poole made friends with a curious wild male named Vladimir. He would let Poole touch his trunk and tusks. After a separation of 12 years, Poole wondered how Vladimir would react to seeing her. "I called to him and he came over and let me touch him again," she says. "There was no doubt in my mind that he remembered me—I was the only one who ever had that kind of interaction with him." Elephants remember important things about their environment, too. A single elephant can devour hundreds of pounds of leaves and vegetation and guzzle 50 gallons of water every day. For the savannah elephants in the grasslands of East Africa, where trees are scattered and the land often becomes bone-dry, memorizing where to find distant food and water is a matter of survival. And even if an old watering hole appears dry, the clever elephants know to dig a well.

## 4 Elephants figure out things with their trunks.

Most people know that elephants use their trunks to trumpet loudly, to say things like "I'm happy" or "Leave me alone." But elephants' trunks, like our handy thumbs, also give them the ability to grab things and handle them carefully. Elephants use their trunks to stuff food into their mouths, fling stones, and sometimes get into mischief. "They outsmart humans all the time," says George Wittemyer, a biologist who studies elephants with the organization Save the Elephants. Elephants lift the lids on water tanks and suck them dry while people sleep, and they've figured out how to turn on a faucet to get a drink. "It's a testament to how intelligent they are," says Wittemyer. "But unfortunately they don't turn the faucet off—to the great annoyance of the people living there!"



## 5

## Elephants care for the injured.

If elephants are in trouble, their friends and family help them. Wittemyer remembers when he and other researchers tranquilized a female elephant in order to fit her with a radio collar. "The elephant was starting to get woozy, and was about to fall over," says Wittemyer. Other elephants thought she had been wounded and came to help. "They tried to hold her up," he says. They lifted her with their tusks and pulled with their trunks. On another occasion, Wittemyer saw elephant family members visit a young female with a broken leg every day until she recovered. He thinks it is likely the injured female would have died without the companionship and assistance. "Being a good friend is very important to elephants," he says.

## 6

## Elephants feel sad when another dies.

Unlike most animals, elephants seem to grieve after a death. Wittemyer saw a female elephant become deeply depressed after her baby died from an illness. Sometimes the mother lingered alone near the place where her baby had died. "Other times she'd run around trumpeting and ripping up bushes," he says. She stayed near the site for three months before rejoining her family group and returning to normal life. Elephants also behave very oddly when they come across elephant remains. They become unusually quiet and carefully sniff and feel the bones with their trunks. "I think they're smart enough to make the connection between those large bones and a once-living elephant," says Poole. "I feel elephants have a very clear understanding of their own mortality."



# 7 Elephants make long-distance calls.

Imagine you're wearing a blindfold. How many of your friends do you think you could identify by voices alone? Female elephants can recognize the calls of about 100 different extended family members. They can even tell who's who from a mile and a half away. Elephant families tend to split up into smaller groups for days or weeks when they travel or search for food. Their ability to remember each other's low-pitched rumbles lets elephants keep in touch until the next family reunion. But elephants' "caller ID" also serves another purpose. "They're able to recognize who's a friend or foe," says Poole. If the group hears a strange elephant's call, they bunch up and prepare for potentially hostile visitors.



# 8 Elephants adopt orphans.

It's a sad fact that for many animal species, when a mother dies, her children do not have anyone to care for them and also die. Elephants are different. When a matriarch elephant named Tuskless died, her baby calf was orphaned. Tuskless's adult daughter Tulip already had a young calf of her own, but she adopted the orphan anyway. "Because they have such close bonds and close friendships, it's just natural that they would adopt and look after calves," says Poole. What surprised her, though, was when she saw Tulip nursing a third calf—another orphan—that wasn't even part of her extended family. "They're so caring about other elephants," she says. "They're kind of able to put themselves in another's shoes, so to speak...which is definitely a sign of higher intelligence."





THE TRUTH BEHIND  
THE NEW MOVIE

# MONSTERS vs ALIENS

BY SEAN MCCOLLUM

**W**hen aliens invade Earth in the new movie *Monsters vs. Aliens*, the government has no choice but to ask for help from the freakish but lovable monsters they locked away years ago. Can Ginormica, B.O.B., Dr. Cockroach, The Missing Link, and Insectosaurus save the world? More important, what crazy real-life creatures inspired these characters? NG KIDS goes behind the scenes to find out.

## COCKROACH CRUNCH

To stop an alien robot, bug-headed Dr. Cockroach bravely throws himself into the robot's car-crushing jaws to fight him from the inside. Dr. C's exoskeleton—his outer shell—comes out a little chomped but he survives. The indestructibility of cockroaches is legendary. But are they uncrushable?

Nope. "They're actually pretty wimpy," says bug expert Coby Schall of North Carolina State University. "Their exoskeleton is thinner than those of other bugs like beetles. You can squish a cockroach with your fingers."

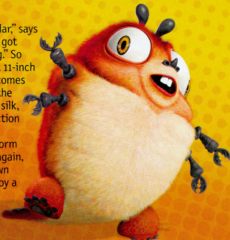


## SLIMY SLOB

To clear the way and save the day, blob-bish B.O.B. must get rid of huge concrete road dividers. How does he do it? By sloshing his blobby body around the dividers and absorbing them, of course. B.O.B. is pure sci-fi, but real-life blobs called slime molds do exist. Microbiologist Bradford Condon of Cornell University, in New York, says slime molds look kind of like a fungus, but they're actually simple animals. Their jellylike mass creeps along in wavy motions and engulfs bacteria and other edible bits, sucking in the nutrients and leaving the rest behind.

## SUPERSILKER

"Insectosaurus is a giant caterpillar," says director Conrad Vernon. "But he's got the personality of a big puppy dog." So when aliens try to abduct 49-foot 11-inch Ginormica, Insectosaurus loyally comes to her rescue by shooting silk at the aliens. Real caterpillars do create silk, but it's more for their own protection as they wrap their bodies in silk chrysalises and cocoons to transform into butterflies and moths. Then again, one type of caterpillar will tie down snails with silk so the bug can enjoy a leisurely meal. How monstrous!





## FROZEN IN TIME

The movie's half-ape, half-fish prehistoric monster called The Missing Link was thawed out 20,000 years after he had been trapped in ice. No such beast exists, of course, but a few amphibians and reptiles—such as the wood frog and painted turtle—are indeed “freeze-tolerant.” Their bodies have special chemicals that allow their cells to survive freezing and thawing,” says zoologist Jon Costanzo of Miami University, in Ohio. Their hearts stop for days, weeks, and even months until bugs and other prey emerge again in warmer weather.



## FISH OUT OF WATER

The Missing Link may be part mammal, but he enjoys swimming in the sewers like the half-fish that he is. Believe it or not, some real fish—such as the Asian walking catfish—really can live on land and in water. “Over time, they developed modified lungs,” says fish expert Ray Owczarzak of the National Aquarium, in Maryland. Why? These lungs breathe air for a few days if a pond dries up and the fish needs to find a new home.

## TEST YOUR PARENTS!

See if your parents can match each *Monsters vs. Aliens* creature to its 1950s monster movie inspiration (below).

1. Ginoormica is one inch shorter than the character from this flick.
  2. B.O.B.'s slurpy table manners have a lot in common with this film's alien invader.
  3. Nuclear testing created *Insectosaurus* and this movie's fire-breathing lizard.
  4. Neither Dr. Cockroach nor the monster from this classic film should have experimented with bugs.
  5. The Missing Link has webbed feet and gills like this movie's villain, but the *MysA* creature is much nicer.
- A. *The Fly*  
 B. *Creature from the Black Lagoon*  
 C. *The Blob*  
 D. *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*  
 E. *Godzilla*

ANSWERS: 1.D, 2.C, 3.E, 4.A, 5.B



BY MARGARET McMULLAN

# Sea Turtle Rescue

## How veterinarians healed this badly injured creature

**T**he green sea turtle was in trouble. Its shell was badly damaged. The reptile's rear flippers were unable to move, and its rump kept floating above the surface of the water. Luckily a marine biologist on his boat spotted the struggling turtle. He lifted the sea turtle and put it into his fishing boat, keeping it wet as he steered toward shore. The turtle protection program he contacted arranged for the sea turtle to be rushed to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA), in Florida.

**THE TURTLE** was not fully grown, so the CMA couldn't tell whether it was a male or a female. On the charts, they wrote "undetermined," but they named the turtle Pete.

The biologists determined Pete could not move his hind flippers because he had been struck by a boat. He was malnourished, too. If Pete hadn't been brought in that day, the turtle certainly would have died.

Pete's rescuers at the aquarium put him on antibiotics to help him fight infection, and they fed him fresh squid. After a few months, Pete's shell began to heal, but he still swam in the same unusual way—head down, rump up. Everyone realized if they released Pete back into the sea, he would never be able to swim away from danger. Most likely, sharks would kill him or a boat would hit him again. So for the next five years, Pete lived at the aquarium with other turtles, eating squid, fish, and romaine lettuce.

One day, the CMA got a call from the Shedd Aquarium, in Chicago, Illinois. They had recently lost a sea turtle and offered Pete a new home at Shedd's coral reef habitat. Everyone agreed that Pete would do well at the new aquarium. The CMA packed up Pete in a crate, safely covered with foam and damp towels so his skin wouldn't dry out. Then they flew him in an airplane to Chicago.

**AT HIS FIRST CHECKUP** at Shedd, x-rays revealed something in Pete's throat. An object was lodged in his esophagus. Vets guessed that the object was a coin Pete must have come across somewhere and swallowed. Sea turtles eat almost anything. The

veterinarians used an instrument with a small retrieval tool and removed a 1975 nickel.

**DURING THE PROCEDURE**, the vets discovered one other thing. Pete had matured and grown to about 124 pounds. It was now possible to determine that Pete was in fact a female. Pete got a new name: Nickel.

Because of the boat accident, Nickel will always swim the same way—rump up. But if you go to Chicago and visit the Shedd Aquarium, you will see that Nickel's shell has healed, although she still has a noticeable scar.

Nickel loves to wake up from a nap beneath her spot in the coral and swim up to the platform built for her above water. She knows that aquarium staff will be there to feed her romaine lettuce or special sushi wraps, conduct training sessions that prepare her for health checkups, and scratch her shell. Even though a turtle's shell is hard, it's very sensitive because it has thousands of nerve endings. When anyone scratches her back, Nickel swims in closer to encourage her human friends to continue the scratching she enjoys. The staff at Shedd call that the Nickel-tickle.

NICKEL EATS ABOUT \$1,000 WORTH OF LETTUCE EACH YEAR.



THE INJURED SEA TURTLE ADJUSTS TO A NEW HOME AFTER BEING RESCUED.





# Rescue

feature



HUNTING WITH GOLDEN EAGLES  
IS TRADITION AMONG THE  
KAZAKH PEOPLE OF

# Mongolia

BY JEREMY SCHMIDT

**G**alloping on horseback across a rocky plain, a man rides with a golden eagle perched on his hand. As a hare darts out from behind a boulder, the eagle launches into the air, streaking after the hare like a missile.

With a seven-foot wingspan and bone-crushing claws, golden eagles are fierce hunters that can spot prey a mile away. But this eagle is not hunting for herself; she's claiming prey for her master.

## Feathered Friends

The bird's owner, named Baitolda (BUY-tol-dah), is a member of a group of Kazakh (KAH-zahk) people who have trained eagles for hundreds of years. For these Kazakhs, who live in the remote Altay Mountains of Mongolia, a country in Asia, these birds of prey are both hunting companions and honored family members. Eagle hunters, called *burkitshi* (ber-kuht-SHEE) in the Kazakh language, are some of the most respected members of their community. And Baitolda is one of the best.

## Basic Training

Teaching these wild predators to hunt with humans is no small feat. Burkitshis have to become experts on how the birds behave.

"The eagle must depend on the hunter for food," says Baitolda. "If she learns how to feed herself, she might go wild and not come back."

One of Baitolda's techniques is to set the bird on a high boulder, hold up a

rabbit leg and call, "Kaa, kaa," to get the eagle to speed toward him. He steadies himself as the bird lands with one powerful claw gripping his padded glove and the other grasping the rabbit leg. The eagle quickly learns the lesson: returning to her owner's glove means lunch!

## On the Move

Baitolda is one of about 150,000 Kazakhs who still live a traditional nomadic lifestyle. When the seasons change, families load up camels, and sometimes trucks, with their belongings and trek through the mountains on horseback to find fresh pastures for their sheep and goats. Only in winter do families return to permanent houses built from bricks made of mud.

During the journey, Baitolda's eagle rides on his hand and has a perch inside the family's sturdy tent—called a yurt, or *ger* in Mongolia. But the eagle also earns her keep. The foxes and hares she catches provide fur for the family's winter clothing—a necessity in temperatures that can dip to minus 40°F.

## Back to Nature

When an eagle turns eight, Kazakhs traditionally release the bird back into the wild to forget her training. As a *burkitshi* named Khopei (KOH-pie) says, "They have to live free to make more eagles."



## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MONGOLIA?

**LOCATION:** Central Asia

**HOW TO GET THERE:** more than 15 hours by plane from Los Angeles, California

**POPULATION:** 2.6 million

**LANGUAGES:** Mongolian, Kazakh, and others

## ▼ LEARN TO SPEAK KAZAKH!

**FATHER:** ake (ah-KEH)

**MOTHER:** ana (ah-NAH)

**HELLO:** sahlem (sah-LEM)

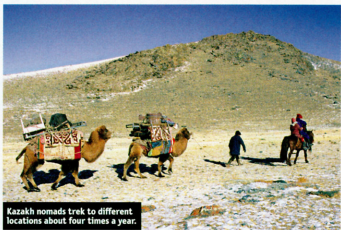
**THANK YOU:** rakhmet (rakh-MET)

**GOOD:** jaqsy (jahk-SUH)





A Kazakh eagle man, called a burkitshi, has a sacred relationship with his bird. In Kazakh culture, an eagle can be as valuable as a good horse.



Kazakh nomads trek to different locations about four times a year.



Kazakh children dress up for a festival.



Straps on the eagles' feet allow burkitshis to hold onto the birds.



Yurts, also called gers, are portable homes for Kazakh nomads. They fold up small enough to fit on a camel's back.

## HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE A KAZAKH NOMAD?

	LUNCH	FOR FUN	CHORES
KIDS IN THE U.S.	PB&J sandwich	Play soccer; go to the movies	Clean up bedroom; wash dishes
KAZAKH KIDS	Salty milk tea and a bowl of noodle soup	Sing with friends; ride horses	Girls milk goats; boys herd goats

HORSE: at (AHT)

HARE: qoyan (koy-AHN)

FOX: tulki (tool-KUH)

EAGLE: burkit (ber-KUHT)

EAGLE HANDLER'S MITT: golgap (kohl-HOB)



# Fun Stuff

**games, laughs, and lots to do!**



# Mousetrap

A tiny mouse has sneaked into this restaurant and caused chaos. Find 20 things in the dining room that the mouse has nibbled on, and then find the mouse. We've circled one nibble for you.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 34

Play interactive "What in the World?" and other games online.  
[kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)

These images show things that are associated with outer space. Unscramble the letters to identify what's in each picture. Seeing stars?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 34



## Family Project

# Pamper Yo

Ask for a parent's help and permission before you get started.

**7** fun and inexpensive ways to give your pet a taste of the good life.

### Tug-of-War Dog Toy

#### YOU WILL NEED

- OLD ADULT-SIZE JEANS
- PINKING SHEARS
- 2 RUBBER BANDS

#### WHAT TO DO

Ask a parent for permission to cut up old jeans. You can use three different shades or colors of denim, if you like. Using pinking shears, cut three strips of denim, each about 2½ feet long and four inches wide. Stack the three strips together. Tightly wrap a rubber band around one end of the stack, about

five inches from the end. Hold that end between your knees as you braid the three strips together. The braid should be very tight. Leave about five inches unbraided on the end that's closest to you. Secure a rubber band at that end of the braid. Make strong knots at both ends where the rubber bands are, then cut off the rubber bands. Trim the ends of the toy as needed. Cut fringes in the ends, unless your dog has a very strong bite. Then challenge your pup to a game of tug-of-war.

**PARROT PLAYTIME**  
BABY TOYS SUCH AS PLASTIC KEY RINGS CAN TURN YOUR PARROT'S CAGE INTO A PLAYGROUND.

#### HAMSTER BED

CUT 12 HOLES IN THE BOTTOM OF A CARDBOARD EGG CARTON. FILL IT WITH SHREDDED PAPER TOWELS. THEN CLOSE THE CARTON. TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN SO YOUR HAMSTER CAN CRAWL IN THROUGH THE HOLES.





# ur Pets!



## Happy Birthday Cake

### YOU WILL NEED

- SEVERAL CANS OF WET DOG OR CAT FOOD
- ASSORTED DOG OR CAT TREATS

### WHAT TO DO

Shape the wet food into cake layers. You can use plastic containers as molds. Decorate the cake with kitty or doggie treats. Sing "Happy Birthday" and watch your pet dig in. Remember to monitor your pet to make sure it doesn't overeat.



## Pooch Shampoo

### YOU WILL NEED

- 2 CUPS BABY SHAMPOO
- 2 CUPS WATER
- 2 CUPS APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- 1/2 CUP GLYCERIN (AVAILABLE AT PHARMACIES)

### WHAT TO DO

Mix all ingredients in a large pitcher, then pour the liquid into clean, recycled bottles for easy use. When washing, keep the soap out of your dog's eyes and mouth, and rinse well. Ask your vet how often your dog should be washed.



## Cool Collars

### YOU WILL NEED

- FABRIC COLLAR THAT FITS YOUR PET • NONTOXIC 3-D FASHION PAINT • TACKY GLUE • PLASTIC GEMS AND BEADS

### WHAT TO DO

Paint a design or your pet's name on the collar. Let dry. Glue on gems and beads. Lay flat and dry overnight. Make sure the gems and beads are secure before putting the collar on your pet.



## Mouse Catnip Toy

### YOU WILL NEED

- TWO COLORS OF FLEECE
- BUTTON THREAD
- NEEDLE
- DRIED CATNIP
- UNCOOKED RICE
- THREE 10-INCH LENGTHS OF RIBBON

### WHAT TO DO

1. Cut out a six-inch square of fleece and fold it in half. Keeping the fold on the bottom, cut out the mouse shape shown above. Be sure to cut through both layers of the fleece.
2. Starting at the mouse's nose, use small stitches to sew the sides tightly together along the mouse's spine. (The knot in the thread should be on the inside of the nose.) Leave the last two inches of the back open.
3. Fill the toy with a mixture that is equal parts catnip and uncooked rice.
4. Continue sewing. When you reach the last quarter inch, stack up the ribbons and sew one end of the stack into the opening. Stitch through the ribbons and fleece about six times in the same place, or until secure.
5. Braid the ribbons together to about halfway down the tail, then knot. If you wish, sew on fleece ears in a contrasting color and use black thread to stitch the eyes and whiskers.

# Art Zone

## COOL ADVENTURES

NG KIDS show off their sense of adventure in these daring drawings.

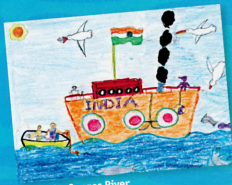


▲ **With My Horse on Trails**  
Hailey Sheedy, 14  
New Carlisle, Indiana



▲ **Buffalo Roundup**  
Caitlin Bryant, 12  
Draper, Utah

**Kennedy Space Center**  
Dmytro Kusen, 10  
Farmington, Connecticut



▲ **The Ganges River, in Kolkata, India**  
Kinjal Dey, 7  
Peoria, Illinois

## Answers

Top row: galaxy, astronaut, moon.  
Middle row: space shuttle, coop.  
Bottom row: Saturn, Mars rover, satellite.



▲ **Mouse on the Moon**  
[page 30]

## Draw an original cartoon character.

Send your original drawings to  
NG KIDS—Cartoon Character Art Zone  
P.O. Box 98002  
Washington, DC 20090-8002

Include your name, address, phone number, date of birth, a title for your drawing, a statement that it is your own work, and the name of your parent or guardian. Your parent or guardian must sign a release for publication of your illustration. Submissions become the property of the National Geographic Society and all rights thereto are transferred to the National Geographic Society. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Selection will be at the discretion of NG KIDS.

▼ **Quarrel Coral**  
September Weister, 12  
Orting, Washington



# Back Talk

Do I have anything on my face?



What do YOU think this kid is thinking?

1. Fill in the thought balloon.
2. Cut out the entire picture (or make a photocopy of it).
3. Mail it along with your name, address, phone number, and date of birth to NG KIDS, Back Talk, P.O. Box 96000, WASHINGTON, DC 20090-6000. Selection for publication in a future issue will be at the discretion of NG KIDS.

## From the November Issue



You have something in your teeth.

Lily Friedrichsen, 11  
Sutherland, Iowa

Hand over the spoon and no one will get hurt.

Jacob Denson, 9  
Raleigh, North Carolina

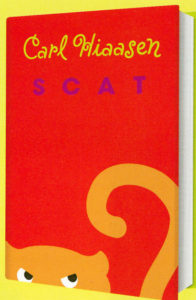
Do you know the muffin man?

Bethany Toscano, 11  
Hemet, California

Hey, I'm not in Ratatouille.

Edward Cieszynski, 10  
Mequon, Wisconsin

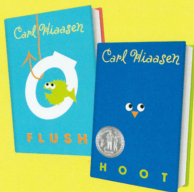
PART  
ECO-ADVENTURE,  
PART  
MYSTERY,  
100%  
HILARIOUS!



NEW from  
Bestselling Author

Carl Hiaasen!

More eco-adventures!



RANDOM HOUSE  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS



For fun games, visit  
[www.hiaasenforkids.com](http://www.hiaasenforkids.com)



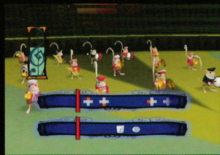
BASED ON THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

# Coraline

The Game



Join Coraline in her thrilling adventure through two distinct worlds filled with unique characters and fun, mini-games.



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LAIKA FOCUS  
FEATURES



Mild Cartoon Violence  
Mild Suggestive Themes



PlayStation 2

NINTENDO DS

Wii

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